



United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0905

BILL NELSON
FLORIDA

February 3, 2005

The Honorable John Shaw
Assistant Secretary for Environmental Health and Safety
Department of Energy (EH-1)
1000 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, D.C. 20585

Dear Assistant Secretary Shaw:

It has been established that workers of the now defunct American Beryllium Company in Tallevast, Florida are at substantial risk of developing beryllium disease. As you know, these workers were on the frontline of the Cold War and may develop lethal conditions as a result of their service to our country. These employees need and deserve a medical screening to determine their condition and provide, where appropriate, follow on care by qualified occupational physicians. For these reasons, I am seeking funding from the Department to provide workers with a comprehensive beryllium screening and outreach program.

As you may know, the local health department in Manatee County appropriated \$54,000 for beryllium screening from its county budget and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease (ATSDR) has added another \$50,000 which also covers community residents. I understand that DOE also provides funds to ATSDR under an interagency agreement, and would welcome the opportunity explore additional funding opportunities for screening community residents.

I commend Manatee County and ATSDR for their initiatives, but to ensure that every worker exposed to beryllium at this plant has the opportunity to be screened, more resources must be devoted. I understand that the Department has provided beryllium screening for employees of DOE/AEC beryllium vendors in other parts of the country, including two facilities in Pennsylvania and four facilities in Massachusetts. I also note and commend your recent efforts to assist current tank farm workers at the DOE Hanford facility as well.

The Department should seek a cooperative agreement with a University-based occupational medical program, or other appropriate party, to initiate a comprehensive beryllium screening and outreach program for American Beryllium workers. It is imperative that we take steps to assist these workers and their families. Your assistance in securing Department of Energy resources for these veterans of the Cold War would be greatly appreciated.

I look forward to working with you on this very important issue. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Bill Nelson